

The Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Building (1892)

228 Main Street, Huntington

At the end of the Civil War, Huntington's citizens wanted to create a memorial to the 39 Huntingtonians who had died during the war. In 1886, the town's veterans and leading citizens joined together to create The Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Association. It was decided that a memorial building would be built to house the library. Fund raising efforts finally bore fruit when the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Building was completed in 1892.



The building was the first of several monumental civic structures built in Huntington in the two decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century. The others include The Huntington Sewing and Trade School Building, built in 1905 that now houses The Huntington Historical Society's archives and administrative offices; Old Town Hall, built in 1910; and the Huntington Fire Department, built in 1911, now home to a furniture store. The Memorial Building, Old Town Hall and the Trade School are all listed on the National Register of Historic Places, as part of Old Town Hall National Register Historic District.

The Memorial building and the Trade School building were designed by the prominent New York City firm of Cady, Berg and See. The firm also designed the American Museum of Natural History (1890), the original Metropolitan Opera building (1883 – no longer standing); as well as academic buildings at Yale, Williams, and Wesleyan Universities. The use of such a prominent firm to design these local Tudor Revival style buildings reflects the town's growth and prosperity despite having a population of fewer than 10,000. The buildings are evidence of Huntington's reputation as an "ideal suburb" of New York City well before the post World War II building boom. Civic pride was reflected in the design and construction of the Memorial building as the community's new library.

The cannon in front of the building was given to the Town in 1903 by the federal government in honor of Huntington's 250th anniversary. The cannon had stood guard over New York Harbor.

The building continued to house the Huntington Public Library until 1958, when the library outgrew the space and moved down the street to its current location at 338 Main Street. The building was then used for town offices and since 1969 has served as the office for the Town Historian. The Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Association, which continued to hold title to the building, decided in the summer of 2000 to donate it to The Huntington Historical Society to ensure its long-term stewardship and to increase public awareness of and access to the memorial.

The Society plans to restore the building and use it as exhibit space to share its outstanding collection of historic resources. The exhibit space will double as a visitor center and allow Huntington's many cultural attractions to provide visitors and residents with a one-stop venue to learn about all Huntington has to offer.

*For more information contact the
Huntington Historical Society
209 Main Street, Huntington, NY 11743
631-427-7045; FAX 631-427-7056*